



Betty Jean Cagna

February 27, 1930 - December 26, 2013

Betty Jean (Gerkin) Cagna, age 83 of Lexington, Missouri died on Thursday, December 26, 2013, at the Lexington Care Center in Lexington, Missouri.

Betty was the first-born child of Mary (Rutherford) and Gus Gerkin, born on February 27, 1930. Her roots were nourished on a farm about eight miles south of Higginsville, Missouri for about five years. Later the family established a home in Aullville, Missouri, where Betty grew up and attended elementary school.

In high school, Home Economics was Betty's favorite class where she enjoyed sewing, which later became her major in college. Betty graduated from Higginsville High School in 1948 and from Central Missouri state College in 1952. During college she also taught at a rural school.

Betty married Joe Cagna of Lexington on November 18, 1952 in Kailua, Oahu, Hawaii. Joe served in the Marine Air Group in Kaneohe Bay and Betty taught school in Kailua and Kaneohe. While Betty later traveled extensively, she said that Hawaii was her favorite place because she was married there, had her first child there, and because of it's incredible beauty. Returning to Lexington in 1954, Betty and Joe built their own home and she once again began teaching. In 1960, their son, Christopher Joseph was born.

In 1966, Betty was proud to represent Missouri in the Mrs. America pageant as Mrs. Missouri. When interviewed in 1966, Betty said she tries to be active because a busy person is a happy person. Betty was a teacher most of her life, but said, "I desire to never forget that family life and humaneness are of utmost importance in keeping me on a human level with myself, students and others. My desires are to continue educating myself." She obtained her Masters Degree in both Home Economics and Counseling. In 1973, she opened Betty's See-N-Sew in Higginsville, Missouri where she continued giving sewing lessons. In 1979, she sold the business to teach full-time at CMSU in Fashion Merchandising. She worked as an Assistant Professor until her retirement in 1981. She also taught at Park University and worked as an elementary and high school teacher. She

was a member of American Association of University Women and Kappa Omicron Phi-Home Ec.

Betty was involved in many community and church organizations. She was a member of the Business and Professional Women's Club, holding several offices and a member of Beta Sigma Phi. Involved in the Methodist church, Betty was a lay leader, district lay-speaker and served on the International Committee on Religion and Race, 1972 delegate to General Conference and was a member of Esther Circle of the local church. She lived most of her life in Lexington.

Retiring from teaching, Betty had dreams of traveling and became a travel agent herself. She did not let her back injuries from a 1969 car accident keep her from seeing the world. Betty reached the Global Ambassador Silver level of achievement by visiting over 150 countries and islands. Through these endeavors, she traveled far and wide and made friends all over the world. She traveled with her four grandchildren on exciting trips to Africa, Iceland, Galapagos Island, Amazon cruise, Hawaii and many other interesting places.

Betty lived life to the fullest and to no one's rules, standards, or expectations. She truly did it "her way". Yet family was the cornerstone of Betty's life. She once said, "I like to be a sincere, loving, kind person, always interested in my grandchildren." She was a wonderful grandmother to Mark, Stephen, Joanne and Mandy.

Surviving are one son, Chris Cagna of Lexington; one daughter, Theresa "T-Ann " (Dave) Heimsoth of Shawnee Mission, Kansas; one brother, Bill (Evelyn) Gerkin of Tigard, Oregon; one sister, Dorothy Hoefer of Higginsville; four grandchildren, Mark (Debra) Heimsoth, Stephen (Jessica) Heimsoth, Joanne (Robert) Fields, Amanda (Chad) Weigand; three great grandchildren, Lily, Maria, and Elise Heimsoth.

Preceding her in death are her parents and husband, Joe Cagna.

A Funeral service will be at 2:00 P.M. on Monday, December 30, 2013 at the United Methodist Church, 1211 S. Business Hwy. 13, Lexington with Pastor Terry Cook officiating. Burial will be in the Missouri State Veterans Cemetery, Higginsville.

The family will receive friends from 1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. on Monday prior to the Service. Memorials may be made to the United Methodist Church or Alzheimer's Association.

Pallbearers are Chris Cagna, Dave Heimsoth, Mark Heimsoth, Stephen Heimsoth, Robert

Fields, and Chad Weigand. Honorary pallbearers are Don Mudd and Ryszard Klosek.

Online condolences may be made to the family at www.hoeferfuneralhome.com

Comments



“ Thinking of you, T-Ann. I have so many warm memories of your mom and mine. My thoughts are with you and your family.
Joetta

Joetta Coen - April 28, 2018 at 10:39 AM



“ We have a lot of good memories of sharing holidays & birthday celebrations with Betty & Joe at the farm. She always had interesting stories about her most recent travels. It was so special that her grandchildren got to take special trips with her. I'm sure that each have very special memories of those times.
These last years have been difficult for everybody. Our condolences are with all family members. May knowing that she is in God's hands, bring comfort & peace.

Connie Gibson - April 28, 2018 at 10:39 AM